

National Family Caregiver Support Program Resources

Transportation Issues to Consider



Introduction

The United States population is growing older and living longer. Although the majority of older persons are living healthy and active lives, there are a significant number of individuals who need community supports to help them meet their daily needs. Being able to drive is essential for older Americans living in the community to maintain their independence. As the population grows, it will be important to ensure that older Americans drive as long and as safely as possible and that alternatives are available to individuals who no longer drive.

Older Persons And Driving

- The number of older persons making trips is rapidly increasing, as is the frequency of those trips and the distance traveled.
- Most older persons avoid rush hour and drive fewer miles, shorter distances, and less at night. Collision rates decrease steadily with age.
- By the time a driver is 65, the risk of a major accident drops to less than 1%.
- Two-thirds of older adults who stop driving say it was because of physical impairments.
- One-third of older adults who do not drive rely on family and friends for their transportation. Others rely on public and volunteer transportation alternatives to maintain their mobility and independence.

Retiring From Driving

The next few years will bring the largest ever group of older drivers to our roads and highways. The good news is that despite the declining physical conditions associated with advancing age, research is showing that older persons are successfully adjusting for those age-related changes and are now driving safely well into their 70s, 80s and 90s.

Access to transportation is an essential part of an older person's ability to remain independent in the community. However, for some older persons, retiring from driving is necessary.

Retiring From Driving: It's A Family Affair

Some older drivers need the support of family and friends to make the transition from driving to utilizing transportation alternatives. To support an older relative in this transition, family members can:

- Prepare a list of safety, medical and behavioral concerns related to continued driving;
- Discuss concerns, implications of continued driving, and ramifications of a crash with the family member;
- If the driver's physician or other professional recommends the older person no longer drive, get the information in writing and have it available for the discussion;
- Find out what the medication instructions say about the medicines the driver is taking – prescribed or over the counter;
- Identify transportation alternatives so they can begin making plans for how they will maintain their mobility and independence.

Alternatives To Driving

Retiring from driving does not mean retiring from life! There are many transportation services available in communities across the country for older adults who do not drive. Such alternatives may include para-transit, public transportation, senior van services, taxi vouchers, medical vans and ride share programs.

To locate resources and transportation options, contact the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). In a few states, the State Unit or Office on Aging

serves as the AAA. To locate the appropriate AAA or local transportation provider, contact the Administration on Aging (AoA) supported information and assistance directory called the Eldercare Locator. Call the Eldercare Locator from anywhere in the nation, toll-free at 1-800-677-1116, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. For 24-hour access to the Eldercare Locator, visit the website at www.eldercare.gov.



Working Together

AoA and the U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to assist their respective networks in the coordination of transportation services for older adults and to facilitate access to these services by older adults. The focus of the MOU is to help states and communities assess their level of coordination. An action plan has been developed and includes:

- Leveraging available resources at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Conducting regional workshops and technical assistance to assist state and local agencies with increasing collaboration and partnerships.

- Implementing technologies that can provide opportunities to coordinate services, scheduling, and billing processes.
- Helping older adults and their families understand how to use and access their transportation options.

Additional transportation resources

Easter Seals Project Action National Assessable Travelers' Database: Provides city specific information on transportation systems.

<http://projectaction.easter-seals.org>

Transportation Solutions for Caregivers: Easter Seals: Provides tools and resources to improve transportation for older adults.

www.easterseals.com/ntl_trans_care

Community Transportation Association: Provides a host of resources on senior transportation.

http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/senior_publications.asp

When You Are Concerned: New York Office for the Aging: A handbook for caregivers on driving safety.

<http://aging.state.ny.us/caring/concerned/index.htm>

Mini-Self Assessment of Driving Ability – Sedgwick County Department on Aging/Central Plains Area Agency on Aging:

<http://aging.cpaaa.org/forms/Driving%20Self%20Assessment.pdf>

The Hartford® Family Conversations with Older Drivers: Safe Driving for a Lifetime. Provides a handbook and resources for families and older drivers.

<http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/index.htm>

Information provided in this fact sheet was adapted from materials submitted by Easter Seals, Chicago, IL. For more information, visit their website www.easterseals.com.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

AoA recognizes the importance of making information readily available to consumers, professionals, researchers, and students. Our website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals involved in aging programs and services. For more information about AoA, please contact: US Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; phone: (202) 401-4541; fax: (202) 357-3560; Email: aoainfo@aoa.gov; or contact our website at: www.aoa.gov